DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 206 808 CE 029 768

TITLE Vocational Education: Purposes, Roles, Responsibilities. Position Statement of National Association of State Directors of Vocational Education.

INSTITUTION National Association of State Directors of Vocational Education.

PUB DATE 1 May 80

NOTE 9p.; For a related document see CE 029 769.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Access to Education; Educational Finance; *Educational Objectives; *Educational Philosophy; Educational Research; *Educational Responsibility; Education Work Relationship; Equal Education; Federal State Relationship; *Government Role; Government School Relationship; Position Papers; *Public Policy; State Departments of Education; State School District Relationship; *Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

The main purposes of vocational education are to provide individuals with the skills they need to attain economic freedom and to enhance the productivity of local, state, and national economies. Vocational education programs exist to serve all peoples and to aid in providing all skills needed for the individual to attain and keep a job related to his/her needs and skills that will serve employers' needs. Vocational education achieves its purposes through three basic types of roles: principal roles, shared roles, and support roles. Vocational education's principal roles are preparing all persons for work for entry jobs, upgrading, retraining, and cross training; and providing orientation to work. Vocational education shares the following roles with other groups in the community: job placement; economic development; productivity and efficiency; individual assessment; and human resource development. The major support roles for vocational education are helping to develop the basic or fundamental educational skills required in the work that the vocational student expects to perform; helping to develop survival and living skills of students; and assisting in the area of national defense by providing skilled workers. Vocational education is carried out on three government levels--local, state, and federal. Each level has distinct responsibilities, although these responsibilities should be exercised in partnership. (KC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED206808

POSITION STATEMENT OF
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
STATE DIRECTORS OF
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Vocational Education: Purposes, Roles, Responsibilities

May 1, 1980

CE 029 768

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

James L. Reid

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Vocational Education: Purposes, Roles, Responsibilities

The State Directors of Vocational Education have developed the following statement describing what they perceive to be the main purposes of vocational education, the kinds of programs and the roles through which it accomplishes these purposes, and the appropriate federal, state, and local responsibilities and relationships for assuring that an adequate level and quality of vocational education services exist. The Directors believe that such a statement may be useful to vocational educators and persons concerned with vocational education at a time of considerable debate regarding what vocational education is, what populations it should serve, how it relates to other social programs, and how it should be administered.

PURPOSES

Vocational education operates as an integral part of the total educational delivery system to benefit both individuals and society. Its main purposes are to:

- Provide individuals with the skills they need to attain economic freedom.
- Enhance the productivity of local, state, and national economies.

Vocational education serves and is accountable to a wide variety of publics. These publics include: students of all ages and previous educational backgrounds; national, state, and local governments; business and industry—both large and small; labor—organized or unorganized; consumers; persons with special educational needs, such as the disadvantaged, the handicapped, persons with limited English speaking ability, and many others. Unlike many more specialized programs, vocational education has no particular constituency; it is a program for all people.

Since the purposes of groups and individuals served by vocational education are diverse and often compete or conflict with one another, vocational education responds by providing many different kinds of programs in many different settings. Any one of these programs has some, but not all, of the following purposes:

- Support and strengthen the relationship of education to work.
- Equip individuals with marketable skills.
- Foster full employment by providing a trained work force to meet current and future labor market needs.
- Supply a trained work force which will attract and promote economic and industrial development.
- Furnish individuals with information about the nature of work and work opportunities today and in the future.
- Provide equitable opportunities for all persons to succeed in programs of education for work.
- Help people develop and apply decision making skills, particularly regarding work and careers.
- Assist persons in mastering the basic literacy skills required to meet job specifications.
- Develop people's organizational leadership skills.
- Promote and support the values of free enterprise in a democratic society.

ROLES

Vocational education achieves its purposes through three basic types of roles. It has principal roles in which it assumes a major responsibility, shared roles in which it acts in concert with other groups in the community, and support roles in which it acts to remedy deficiencies for which other groups have principal responsibility.

Vocational education's principal roles are:

- Preparing individuals for work, for entry jobs, upgrading, retraining, and cross training.
- Providing orientation to work.
- Ensuring equity for individuals and population groups in preparation for work.

Shared roles, in which vocational education acts in concert with other groups in the community, involve:

- Job placement.
- Economic development.
- Productivity and efficiency.
- Individual assessment.
- Human resource development.

The major support roles for vocational education are:

- Helping to develop the basic or fundamental educational skills required in the work which the vocational student expects to perform.
- Helping to develop survival and living skills of students.
- Assisting in the area of national defense by providing skilled workers.

Principal Roles

Vocational programs are conducted by secondary and postsecondary educational agencies to prepare youth and adults for work, paid or unpaid. These programs have traditionally emphasized preparation for employment and for work in the home. Increasingly, they also include preparation for entrepreneurship and for key volunteer work needed by the community. While vocational programs are not designed to prepare people for work in which a baccalaureate degree is required for employment, they should not hinder movement into such preparation or employment.

When particular skills can be learned most effectively on the job, it is vocational education's responsibility to arrange and coordinate such on-the-job training and to relate it to in-school learning. Other job preparation is provided by vocational education through formal classroom or laboratory instruction. Often, the most effective preparation is a combination of classroom and laboratory instruction followed by on-the-job training.

All people need orientation to work, and vocational education has a major role in meeting this universal need. Orientation emphasizes career development and provides knowledge of labor markets, career patterns, working conditions, and the advantages and consequences of different work attitudes, habits, etc.

Equity in work is a primary concern of vocational education. In spite of inequities in the job market, it is the responsibility of vocational education, through recruitment and instruction, to attempt to remove barriers and perceived barriers to work which are based on discrimination and stereotyping.

Shared Roles

Responsibility for job placement is shared by the employment service, business and industry, community groups, and vocational education. It is vocational education's responsibility to provide students with accurate information while respecting their privacy, to serve as an advocate of students and former students, and to use information about job markets and placement to improve instructional programs. Placement may become a principal role for vocational education if other institutions do not perform their roles satisfactorily, because placement is an essential outcome for which vocational education is held accountable.

Responsibility for economic development, productivity, and efficiency is shared by vocational educators, employers, employees, community agencies, and government. By working together, all of these groups can maintain or expand markets and employment and improve the quality of work and working life. Vocational education can assist new, expanding, or relocating industries by providing training programs which prepare unemployed persons for new jobs or which teach new skills to employed workers. Vocational education's particular responsibility is to ensure that the necessary connections exist between education and training and the workplace, and to make instruction accessible at the times and places it is most needed.

Individualized assessment, development of employability plans, and other aspects of school-based human resource development are shared among vocational educators, special educators, guidance personnel, and representatives of the home and/or the community. Vocational education has a particular responsibility for ensuring that these activities enhance rather than restrict job and career opportunities.

Support Role

It is the responsibility of general education to provide basic educational skills needed by all persons in their roles as citizens, parents, etc. These basics or fundamentals, which are needed in work, include skills in communicating, calculating, and relating to others. For many students, instruction in basic educational skills is most attractive when directly coordinated with the vocational program in which the students are enrolled. Vocational education has a dual responsibility: to communicate to other educators the importance and practical application of certain basic educational skills in work, and to ensure that these skills are provided as part of the vocational education program to support the development of occupationally specific skills.

Vocational education plays an important support role within the total educational process by helping to develop survival and living skills that may go beyond the benefits that can be measured in direct monetary terms, responding to the particular learning styles of many individual students, and contributing to students' general awareness of their environment and the changes that are taking place in it.

Vocational education can also play an important support role in the area of national defense. Skilled workers prepared to respond to long or short term defense needs can be a great benefit to the national defense program. Vocational education can provide those skilled workers.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Since a highly skilled and knowledgeable work force is essential to the economic stability and growth of local communities, the state, and the nation, all levels of government must be concerned with the condition of the vocational education enterprise. Vocational education is a legitimate concern of all levels of government. Although its delivery is essentially a state and local responsibility, and should remain so, the historical development of vocational education throughout the nation reflects a close relationship between local education agencies, each state's vocational education agency, and the federal government. This working relationship has contributed significantly to the growth of a comprehensive system of vocational education in every state and local community. It must be fostered.

A major reason for the past success of the local, state, federal relationship in vocational education is that respective roles have been reasonably well defined. However, there is a need for continued delineation of roles and functions of the various levels. What are the appropriate roles of the various levels of governmental involvement in the administration and operation of vocational education?

Local Responsibilities

The local education agencies are the key to the provision of adequate and equitable vocational education opportunities, since it is at the local level that vocational programs and services are delivered. The major local responsibilities are to:

- Determine local/area needs for vocational education.
- Develop short- and long-range plans in concert with state planning.
- Operate programs and deliver services.
- Evaluate and provide information on program scope and effectiveness.
- Develop linkages throughout the community, including labor, business, industry, education, government, and community-based organizations.

Sole State Agency's Responsibilities

The sole state agency—the agency designated by each state to administer vocational education—has the primary responsibility for helping local education agencies to provide a high quality of vocational education and employment and training programs and for assuring that there is equal access to these programs. The state agency occupies a central position between the federal and the local levels. In vocational education, only the state agency deals directly with federal agencies and local agencies. The federal and local agencies do not and should not deal directly with one another.

The following are the basic state functions:

- Provide overall leadership and coordination for vocational education and employment and training programs.
- Ensure accessibility to vocational education and employment and training programs.
- Prepare short- and long-range state plans.
- Coordinate with the state advisory council and other local, state, and federal agencies and organizations.
- Assist education agencies in program planning, development and evaluation.
- Collect, analyze, and disseminate information.

- Provide a state finance system.
- Provide a state system of accountability.
- Initiate program improvement activities to include curriculum, personnel development, research, and exemplary practices.
- Monitor programs to strengthen the delivery of vocational and employment and training programs in accordance with state and federal legislation.

Federal Responsibility

The federal government's responsibility is to provide national leadership, in a way that respects and promotes the individuality of the states, by working through each sole state agency to help the state offer quality vocational education and employment and training programs.

Specific areas of federal concern include:

- **Equal Opportunity.** The federal government has a leadership responsibility to see that equality of vocational education opportunities exists among the states and that opportunities within the states are in accordance with the provisions of federal law.
- **Research and Demonstration.** By exercising stimulation and avoiding control, the federal government can help state and local agencies to respond creatively to their vocational education needs. This stimulation can be in the form of grants for innovation, centralized collection and dissemination of information, and sharing of new directions in vocational education.
- **Financing Vocational Education.** The federal government has a financial responsibility to help states provide an adequate level and quality of vocational education services, because such services are essential to the national interest. Federal funding for vocational education has enabled states to offer and extend quality vocational education programs; this local, state, and federal sharing of funding responsibilities must be continued. The federal government must also assume an active role in the coordination and utilization of all existing employment and training programs through the sole state agency.

Federal vocational education policy is most effective if it is designed to strengthen the capacities of state and local agencies to respond to individual state needs and responsibilities. It should foster, not mandate, recognizing that local communities and states have different needs and giving them sufficient flexibility to meet those needs.

The appropriate relationship of federal vocational education officials to their state counterparts is a partnership based on frequent consultation and full respect for each other's legitimate roles. Federal vocational education policy should be designed to provide a level of support that is consistent with the national interest, minimize the stultifying effects of uniformity and excessive regulation, and encourage experimentation and adaptation to meet widely varying needs.